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BOOK REVIEWS

Aspects of Child Life and Education. By G. STANLEY HALL AND SOME OF HIS PUPILS. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1907. Pp. xi+326.

This is announced as the first volume of a series, the purpose of which is to present in systematic and somewhat condensed form many of the psychogenetic studies emanating from Clark University and thus far scattered through its various journals. The papers contained in this first volume (which are said to have less unity than those which are to follow) are, in order, as follows: "The Contents of Children's Minds," "The Psychology of Daydreams," "Curiosity and Interest," "The Story of a Sandpile," "A Study of Dolls," "The Collecting Instinct," "The Psychology of Ownership," "Fetichism in Children," "Boy Life in a Massachusetts Country Town Forty Years Ago." These studies are already more or less familiar to students of educational literature, and this volume will be welcomed as making more accessible certain of them which are of particular value, such as the first, third, fourth, sixth, and last. The criticisms which have been brought to bear upon such studies are almost as well known as their content, and they need not be reiterated here. Their value is naturally greatest in the eyes of those who are convinced that the development of the individual and that of the race is parallel in an important degree. This new presentation does not, however, increase the plausibility of the theory to one who is as yet unconvinced. In fact, he cannot but feel, more decidedly than ever, that the theory is overworked and that in much of its so-called proof points are strained to the breaking. Over and over again the most far-reaching inductions are made on such slender bases of fact that the investigator must be innocent of the canons of scientific method. These criticisms find particular illustration in the article on "Fetichism in Children." Fetichism is now recognized as an old term with a connotation quite inadequate for any minute description of a particular stage in the religious development of the natural races. The use of the term in its exact sense would be questionable enough, but it is here used without any *special* signification, apparently as a blanket expression for everything which savors of animism, magic and primitive superstition generally. But even if we accept the author's use of the term, the phenomena adduced to prove the presence of a fetichistic attitude in children are far from convincing. For example, the fact (reported by a girl of seventeen) that a little boy of three has a bit of an old strap which he always keeps and talks to and takes to bed with him, the fact that another boy plays that pretty stones are people, are samples of the evidence adduced to prove that playthings are really regarded as persons by children. Or what do such responses as these have to do with proving that children are fetichistic: "Wondered where stones came from but was ashamed to ask," or the supposition of another child that "stones come up out of the earth"? The humanizing of stones is supposed to be indicated by the supposition of one child that sand is young stones which will grow up to be rocks, or the supposition of another that stones grow larger at a place in the country than at home,

or that a big black stone in the forest must be very old (as it probably was!). The seeing of pictures of people or animals in cracks on the wall surely reveals no fetichism in children even though fantasy may, in part, have been responsible for this animistic view of the world. The section upon child magic is particularly weak. To give only one or two instances of the ease with which savage characteristics are attributed to the child upon the most slender basis of fact, "A boy of five emptied his pockets for me. In them were a pill-box with imaginary salve to cure your finger when it got hurt and some pretty stones." And this is mentioned as an instance of primitive shamanism in the modern child! In no case is there any apparent recognition of the possibility of explaining an oddity of child belief or fancy through imitation or suggestion, or through a possible peculiarity of his environment. In no case is it recognized that the reported belief may merely accidentally savor an animism, owing to a defect, for instance, in the child's language, or in his lack of abstract terms in which to tell what he thought. The whole article is a veritable jumble in which the play and make-believe of children and their half-developed ideas, reported in many cases by girls in their teens, are mixed with the superstitions of adults to lead us to the conclusion that the child is quite prone to fetichism, e. g., the fact that a distinguished lawyer has for years carried a lucky penny is turned in as evidence.

Most of the articles contain brief discussions of supposed anthropological parallels to the phenomena discussed but the material presented is too fragmentary to have any significance even if the interpretation of it were less superficial.

Aside from the particular theory underlying most of the articles, the reports themselves are of course of peculiar interest to all parents and teachers, and they certainly tend to bring us into closer touch with child life. Of particular value is the "Story of a Sand Pile," and "Boy Life Forty Years Ago."

Our Children. By PAUL CARUS. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1906. Pp. 207.

This is a delightful volume of essays upon child training; the discussions are informal and simple, practical rather than theoretic, and appreciative rather than coldly scientific. Such topics as the use of money, fairness, sympathy with animals, moral discipline, sanitary suggestions, suggestions toward the first steps in teaching mathematical ideas, science, foreign languages, music, are included in the book. It is particularly suggestive of ways the parent can use daily happenings as means of broadening the child's circle of ideas and strengthening his character. No one can read the little volume without a renewal of zeal to live more truly for his children.

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High School Algebra, Elementary Course. By H. E. SLAUGHT, PH.D., assistant professor of mathematics in the University of Chicago, and N. J. LENNES, M.S., instructor in mathematics in the Wendell Phillips High School, Chicago. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1907. Pp. 297.

For some time a revision of the school course in algebra has been an admitted necessity. Many recent studies and discussions have dealt with the